



THE PRIESTLY IDEAL

GEOFFREY HODSON

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By

GEOFFREY HODSON



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✠ Gerrit Munnik,
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HEALTH AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

MAN THE TRIUNE GOD

THE SOUL'S AWAKENING

THUS HAVE I HEARD

MAN'S SUPERSENSORY AND SPIRITUAL POWERS

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FOREWORD

The Liberal Catholic Church has been fortunate in having as its Founders two men who were outstanding spiritual leaders: Bishops Charles W. Leadbeater and James I. Wedgwood. Their writings have now become classics and in many respects form the basis of the work and teachings of the Church.

Continuing in the spirit of the Founders and in response to a suggestion of mine, Mr. Hodson in this book takes up an important aspect of the liturgical work: the attitude and motives of the Priest. This book is therefore a valuable contribution to Liberal Catholic literature stressing an important side of the work which is so often overlooked.

Ordained by Bishop James Wedgwood as a priest in the Liberal Catholic Church, the Reverend Geoffrey Hodson shows in his book the unmistakable influence of his great tutor, particularly in his utter sincerity and devotion to the Lord Christ, combined with a thorough understanding of the deeper aspects of religious ritual and symbolism.

In today's world where there is CONSTANT TENDENCY TO LOWER SPIRITUAL AND MORAL STANDARDS, IT IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO BE REMINDED THAT THERE STILL IS A "priestly ideal", an ideal which not only those in Holy Orders, but all men and women would do well to follow.

The Liberal Catholic Church is still a small Church but it has an important message for the future. May it ever keep its standards high and thereby play its part in the great task of the uplifting of humanity.

✠STEN von KRUSENSTIERNA
Sydney, October 1971

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Whether the search for truth be made by means of profound inward contemplation, by study of the writings of the Sages of old and the results applied to the processes of thinking and living, by practising one or more of the seven methods of yoga, by chemical and alchemical experiments, however symbolic the directions given, or by means of spiritual and occult ceremonial, one fact or truth eventually becomes clear to the student. This is that everything that is sought, be it power, wisdom or knowledge, resides within man himself.

Whilst external evidence and manifestations of the one truth may valuably be studied, the eventual search must lead inwards; for the pathway to the threefold prize leads ever more and more deeply into the interior of the human being. The advice "Look within, there thou art Buddh," and "Christ in you the hope of glory," are the sign-posts which must eventually—and it may be added, exclusively—be followed.

Man is indeed an epitome of the whole of nature, a model in miniature of the totality of the Universe. Eventually—and the sooner the better—the seeker for Truth ceases to explore the many outward-leading pathways, fascinating and even tempting though many of them are, leading as they may seem to secret knowledge, and turns his whole attention to THAT of which he is an incarnation—in a phrase, his true Self—the better for his spiritual progress.

INTRODUCTION

The Author claims little or no personal credit for whatever may prove useful in the following pages; for most, if not all, of the ideas presented were put before him and others by the late Rt. Rev. James I. Wedgwood during highly privileged periods of residence and training under him at St. Michael's Center, Huizen, Holland.

Deep gratitude is hereby offered to Bishop Wedgwood for so much teaching which he gave personally to me on the several occasions of my visits to Huizen and especially before and after my Ordination by him in the Chapel of St. Michael and All Angels. I believe that a great debt is owing to our Bishop for his part in the founding and directing of the Liberal Catholic Church and Movement and the preparation of the Liturgy and Hymn Book.

PART I

CHAPTER I

THE PRIESTLY IDEAL

Correctly and duly prescribed Church Rituals, especially those which were originally formulated by men with spiritual experience and occult knowledge, are effective whenever correctly, reverently and faithfully performed. Complete belief in this effectiveness and uttermost sincerity are, however, essential to a measure of efficacy as the Rituals are performed. Whilst spiritual awareness, self-preparation by purification and deep dedication are to be considered essential in an ideal Priest, there are, however *degrees* of effectiveness in the performance of a Ceremony and these bear a close relationship to the direct understanding and recollection in the mind of the Priest as he progresses through the prescribed Ceremonial. The following notes are therefore offered as possible guidance in the achievement of maximum efficiency as a Priest in Holy Orders.

If one may venture to be quite specific in advancing the priestly ideal, then a list of imperfections and their corresponding perfections would necessarily include the following faults and virtues.

Heedlessness, concerning one's whole life as a Priest and especially concerning all priestly Offices and privileged duties, should ever be replaced by a deeply serious realization of the spiritual nature of "the sweet but heavy burden" of the Priesthood. This is not only a life per-

petually lived, but also to be followed from awakening in the morning, entering Oratory or Church and in the fulfillment of an Office. At all times, alertness concerning one's duties, privileges and responsibilities and a deep determination to fulfill them to the best of one's increasing capacities, should fully occupy the mind. Thus, heedlessness will become replaced by alertness.

The performance of priestly actions in a perfunctory and solely habitual manner must entirely cease. Full intent based upon both knowledge concerning one's Office and realism in the fulfillment of duties should take the place of words spoken and actions performed without paying due attention to the significance of either or both. The repeated gesture of making the Sign of the Cross may here illustrate this ideal. Perfectly made with equal arms and strictly straight lines, combined with full realism based on dedicated will-thought, make of this Sign one of the most spiritually potent actions which it is possible for a man to perform. The highest spiritual Powers may be both invoked and evoked and all unspiritual beings, forces and qualities summarily exorcized, banished indeed, whenever the Sign is thus correctly made. This also applies to every other Ritual movement, and those seeking Holy Orders may well engage in private practice, mentally and physically, of *all* ceremonial movements. In due course, the inner effects will fully be produced at all levels and a gesture never perfunctorily be performed.

Unconsidered and mechanical Ritual actions, with their unavoidable ineffectiveness must be replaced by clearcut movements, firmly but gracefully made with full intent if a Ritual is to

achieve the maximum results for the attainment of which it was planned. Absence of full interest in the hidden aspects of the priestly Office must be replaced by full concern based upon sincere dedication and knowledge acquired by both meditation and study. No single part, no word and no deed, have been included in a Church Ritual without a clear intention to produce an appropriate and specific spiritual result. The attainment of knowledge of the purposes for every part of a Ceremony must replace lack of knowledge, and recollection must replace failure to remember the inner purposes of every Ritual act. Onepointedness throughout, following meditative dedication in silence must replace the absence of total interest in the work for which one has been "called," to the service of the Lord and one's fellowmen.

Admittedly, the reality of the inner significance and results produced is difficult to attain at first. Due self-preparation, memorization and both private and public practice will assuredly bring to the devoted Officiant increasing realization of the interior effects and external results produced by every Ceremonial act. Needless to say, all sense of self-sufficiency and self-importance, particularly in increasing measure over any other person, must be replaced by complete selflessness, self-forgetfulness and self-surrender..

THE PERSONAL LIFE OF THE PRIEST

Impurity of thoughts, emotions and modes of life, especially those deliberately indulged in, must give place to increasing selfpurification in motive, thought, feeling, word and deed. This must be applied to the body itself which before

the performance of Church Ceremonial should be free of all uncleanness and this applies also to under and over clothing. Bathing, clean linen, clean diet and clean habits of life must characterize the whole person of the ideal Priest. The wrists and hands must be especially cleansed before every Service.

Quite naturally, dishonesty in business practices and in any relationships with others must give place to absolute honesty, whilst insufficient prayer and meditation before each part of the Service should be replaced by regular contemplation. Personal prayers of self-offering as a channel for the power, wisdom, blessing and healing-grace of Our Lord Christ form valuable parts of the inner life of a Priest. Here is a list of such necessities:

UNDESIRABLE ATTRIBUTES

1. Self-consciousness and sense of self-importance
2. Heedlessness
3. Perfunctory actions
4. Ineffective motions
5. Mechanical actions
6. Failure of total interest
7. Failure to remember
8. Absence of concern for superphysical and spiritual effects
9. Lack of knowledge re Occult Ritual
10. Lack of mental and spiritual preparation
11. Absence of or insufficient prayer and meditation
12. Dishonesty in business and human relationships
13. Impurity of mind, emotions and life

14. Uncleanliness of body and clothing
15. Imperfections of channelship

THEIR OPPOSITE VIRTUES

1. Self-forgetfulness; Surrender
2. Alertness
3. Full intent based on knowledge and realism
4. Clear cut movements
5. Movements producing maximum results
6. One-pointedness throughout
7. Memorization; Notes
8. Increasing realization
9. Knowledge based upon study of purpose for every part of a Ceremony
10. Meditation, dedication, silence
11. Regular contemplation and personal prayer before every Ceremony
12. Absolute honesty
13. Self-purification
14. Bathing, clean linen, diet, clean habits
15. Perfection of channelship the great ideal to be sought and attained

CHAPTER II

FROM VESTRY TO ALTAR¹

Granted a reasonable measure of fulfillment of these ideals, every priestly action should throughout be performed with the fullest possible intent. Each Vestment should be assumed with dedication and the resolve to fulfill the ideal which it represents.² A deeply intended mental affirmation when the cross on the Stole is kissed for example, and also throughout the complete procedures of vesting. A suggested mental state during the Introit may include the silent prayer: "May the Power, the Presence and the Benediction of the Lord Christ flow forth through me into this Church, upon every member of its Congregation and the people of this neighborhood."

ARRIVAL BEFORE ALTAR

Especial recognition of, and due reverence towards, the Reserved Host if present, are of first importance as is also a mental state which corresponds fully to the meaning of the genuflection and Sign of the Cross upon one's person.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

Applied to one's person, the vertical stroke of this Sign implies the instant descent of spiritual power into and throughout the whole personality, whilst the horizontal arm symbolizes the more material parts of Soul and body into which spiritualizing and energizing power descends. A

¹ *A Shorter Form of the Holy Eucharist*

² *The Science of the Sacrament*, C. W. Leadbeater.

union of the human Soul with the Supreme Deity is also implied and, thus performed, the Sign of the Cross which should be clearly made, elevates and energizes mind and body, thereby aiding in the fulfillment of the priestly ideal.

THE INVOCATION

As this is repeated, the whole personality of the Priest is dedicated and offered to the Three-fold Deity in Whose Name the Service is to be conducted. The Sign of the Cross assisting in bringing about the most perfect channelship—meaning dedicated and intelligently offered—of which the Priest is capable. Admittedly, the time available may be all too brief for such interior participation in the Invocation, but careful study and personal practice whilst *alone* may make the Priest so fully conversant with the ideal that recollection becomes almost instantaneous—*but never automatic*—it should be added.

ASPERGES

Again, the Sign of the Cross is made over the person whilst holding the Aspergill containing the Holy Water. One of the necessities for perfect channelship in the above sense is complete self-purification of mind, emotion and physical body, clothing and Vestments, this being the purpose of the first part of the Asperges. The use of Holy Water can be particularly helpful at the physical level, although all parts of the purely human nature of the Priest can become “cleansed.” Purity, it may be added, also implies the absence of elements of self-personality.

Thus prepared, the Priest is ready to achieve the maximum results in repelling all evil from

both Holy Altar and Church. The exercise of combined clear thought and strong will in the gestures of purification of Church and Congregation is necessary in order to produce maximum effects. Whilst the Church itself may be regarded as a duly Consecrated building, human beings, however pure hearted in themselves, have been obliged to pass through the countryside, towns and streets on their way to the Church. Almost inevitably, certain accretions of impure substances may become attached to their emotional and physical bodies. Fully effective performances of the Asperges will repel all that may be undesirable and the Celebrant may well again use strong will and clear thought in sending forth the purifying power.

Similarly, the Invocation to the heavenly Father that He will send His Holy Angel should ideally be repeated with as much knowledge of the Angelic Hosts, clarity of thought and awareness of the response as may be possible. In his most valuable work, *The Science of the Sacraments*, the Rt. Rev. C. W. Leadbeater has given much information concerning the Asperges and Invocation. The Prayer closes with reference to the ideal channelship and dedication to the service of the Lord Christ. For the second time thus far, the closing word "Amen" is repeated. Each servant of the Lord will doubtless have studied both the mystical significance and *Mantric* effect of the pronunciation of this word of power, which in its turn, may well be uttered with intent.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION OF THE TEMPLE

This call to the members of the Congregation may be regarded as both a self-unification of the Priest with the people and an invitation to them to participate fully, not only in the laying of the foundation as the words imply, but also spiritually and mentally to take part in the Service as a whole. This may be regarded as an extremely important part of the opening Ceremonial, since it reminds all present that Priest and Congregation are *one* in the service of the Lord and that each one of those present should unite spiritually with the Celebrant in all that follows. Here, it may be added that regular instruction to the laity in this and all other Congregational observances can be most helpful, almost indeed obligatory.

CHAPTER III

CANTICLE, CONFITEOR, ABSOLUTION, CENSING

THE CANTICLE

Each Celebrant is of course free to interpret the two opening lines of the Canticle according to his own mystical experience and comprehension. Three interpretations are, however, possible. One of these consists of the usual references to the historical Savior of men, the Lord Jesus Christ. A second approach includes the more mystical view of the Christ Indwelling, the innate, spiritual Principle regarded by mystics as equally manifest in the Supreme Deity, the Universe as a whole and the innermost nature of man. A combination of these two, inclusive of both of them, offers a third response, although the statement that "Christ is our foundation," would seem to imply an accentuation of that "Christ is you," which St. Paul declared to be "the hope of glory." The rest of the Canticle will doubtless be chanted and understood according to one or more of these interpretations.

CONFITEOR

Whilst all participants in such Services in which the Confiteor is included, must be left entirely free to make their confessions in their own especial and generally private manner, guidance might nevertheless usefully be offered.

Complete contrition is naturally of great importance as also is absolute honesty when con-

fessing one's shortcomings to the Lord God, whether before a Priest or in the privacy of one's own Soul.

In addition to the ideals of sincerity and truthfulness in such a procedure, it may here be indicated that the *degree* of efficacy of the Absolution will be in proportion to the sincerity and depths of the confession, always leaving room, however, for an Act of Grace or particular spiritual intervention in the form of a descent of the Power, Compassionate Love and interior revelation from the Logos and the Lord Christ.

Suppliants are, in consequence, well advised to study with care and deep understanding, and perhaps, to memorize the Confiteor, particularly as so beautifully and appropriately worded in our Liturgy.

The absence of an advised mental attitude of excessive, even cringing humility and of self-description as a "miserable sinner," and their replacement with a recognition of one's human weaknesses and errors combined with complete faith and trust in the all-embracing and never-failing understanding and love of God towards His children.

THE ABSOLUTION

This pronouncement by the Priest may be received by the Suppliant in both silence and thankfulness of mind and heart, thereby reducing to a minimum the intrusion of the slightest barriers to the "descent" of heavenly Grace. This ideal may, however, not always be easily attainable by certain temperaments, particularly those who naturally seek complete reasonableness, if not logic, even in the most intimate acts of prayer

and faith. The prayer, that one may be absolved from "all your sins," and the belief that this could occur, may not be readily acceptable by those who believe literally in the affirmations of cause and effect made by our Lord Christ¹ and St. Paul.²

Whilst guidance by a Priest should always be as available and convincing as possible in such cases, a description of the interior and subjective effects of Absolution as here offered might also prove helpful.

One part of such difficulties concerns the meaning given to the word "sin." Human transgressions may be susceptible of one of two major classifications, namely errors in conduct which are largely due to the pressure of tendencies innate in both the substance of the mental, emotional, and physical vehicles and the construction and nervous constitution of the last named. The other kind of transgression—very much more serious from every point of view—consists of the continuous and deliberately planned course of conduct pursued in the full knowledge that it is evil and entirely without consideration for its effects upon others, as well as the actors themselves. The subject of "sin" may, of course, also be considered from other and various points of view, but the above two classifications will suffice especially as far as supposed "Absolution" is concerned. In either case, of course, the operation of the law of cause and effect at the mental, emotional and physical levels cannot be abrogated and the word absolution should never be

¹ *Luke* XVI:17, *Matt.* V:18, VII:1-2, VII:12

² *Gal.* VI:7

given a meaning which could possibly imply any negation of *karma*.

What then could possibly be meant by "the remission of sins?" Does a Priest have any power to bring about such a remission by means of an appeal to the triune Lord of All? For the philosopher, the answers must of necessity be in the negative. What then could and even does occur when the great affirmative prayer is pronounced? A possible answer is, "the restoration by means of spiritual power of the best possible relationship between Monad, Ego and personality, or in a word, "alignment." Serious transgressions inevitably have the effect of reducing and even eliminating for a certain period of time the manifestation of spiritualizing and morally compulsive influences from the outer physical person responsible for the erroneous conduct. This reduction of divine power is of course always comparable to the degree of deliberateness and consciencelessness as far as the wrong conduct is concerned.

It should also be remembered that however grievous the error may have been, sincere regret, deep contrition and, of course, acts of restitution will always make easier and more effective the corrective action from spiritual Sources implied by the word "Absolution." This places a strong emphasis upon the Confiteor, which rightly precedes the Absolution; for genuine, sincere regret is itself the result of the influence of the Inner Self which can be experienced so strongly as to produce a very desirable condition of deep self-shame. When these are present and effective, the Prayer of Absolution possesses the greatest possibility of the re-alignment of the vehicles.

Karma itself, be it remembered, is not solely a sequence of physical causes and effects alone, since the actions and conditions of the mind and the feelings are sometimes intimately involved. Hence, sincere contrition and its expression in the words of the Confiteor may possibly reduce to a certain extent the degree of faulty alignment and the oncoming adversities, which the total “sin” could produce.

THE CENSING

All that has been written concerning the Asperges applies equally to the procedures of both blessing incense and censing, whether of Altar, Church or individuals. Whilst the gums and other fragrant substances of which incense-powder is composed, have of themselves a harmonizing influence, their effectiveness may be greatly enhanced by the process of blessing. Knowledge of the deeply interior and more external effects of this priestly action, the exercise in due humility of the will-thought of the Officiant to the end of Consecration and benediction and the fully conscious application of all that the Sign of the Cross implies—directly projected into the very substance of the grains of the incense and not just the smoke—can very greatly increase the harmonizing and purificatory effects of the act of censing. Whilst a more or less perfunctory performance of this Rite will produce a certain effect, a far greater purification and benediction will follow upon the full use of Priestly will and thought, founded upon knowledge of the purposes for which these actions are performed. Needless to say, the recipients of such censing can benefit very greatly indeed, whilst the pre-

paratory harmonization and cleansing of a whole chapel, church or cathedral would be fulfilled in a far greater degree. Here again, systematic instruction and guidance, together with its intelligent reception and application to the Priestly Office, could be of great value. Indeed, one might almost go so far as to regard them as prime necessities.

The incense itself being thus duly blessed and applied to the charcoal, each swing of the thurible should ideally be accompanied by a positive act of will that the areas or persons will receive the maximum harmonization, purification and preparation for whatever ceremonial is to follow. The composition of the incense is in its turn of considerable importance, a fine blend of carefully selected components being the ideal. In this, the olfactory sense itself may be regarded as an acceptable means of test and compilation.

CHAPTER IV

INTROIT, KYRIE, GLORIA

THE LORD BE WITH YOU
AND WITH THY SPIRIT

Although the words themselves of these two sentences explain their intent, a conscious act of self-unification with all the members of the Congregation on the part of the Priest and a genuine Invocation of spiritual power upon him by the people, are naturally very desirable. Again, intelligent participation based upon knowledge should be the keynote, a unification between Celebrant and members of the Congregation at the level of deeply interior aspects, the Christ consciousness, may be both attained and maintained throughout the rest of the Service. The greater the measure of realized oneness with the people which the Priest can achieve, the greater will be the degree of his channelship for the Ritual powers and spiritualizing influence upon the people of the Congregation.

The prayerful and compassionate self-unification of all Celebrants and their assistants should ideally commence from the moment the Vestry door is opened and the Introcession begins. The action of singing an appointed hymn together with full responsiveness to its "message," the organ music and the action of encircling the Congregation before the Altar is more closely approached, may well all be made use of by the Clergy as opportunities for their self-unification with the people. The accompanying incense and the Episcopal Signs of the Cross, together with the encircling procedure of Introcession, all con-

tribute to this highly desirable, spiritual, intellectual and personal blending of Clergy and Congregation.

INTROIT

This affirmation of the ever inseparable unity of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity which is sung together by all present, may in its turn be made extremely valuable by the presence within the minds of all, of the idea, the ideal—and if it may be, realization—of oneness. Thus, intelligent intent and wholehearted response to the everlasting unity which binds together both the Three Persons and the threefold spiritual Selves of all who are present, will naturally increase the unifying influence of this beautiful chant.

KYRIE

Those who chant this somewhat mysterious, deeply mystic and very solemn “psalm” may according to temperament, well be made an occasion for the experience and the expression of the very highest form of love of which human beings are capable. Such love naturally implies aspiration towards the realization of unity with God, with the Lord Christ, the Lord of Love, the Angelic Hosts who assuredly are present from the very moment of the Invocation for their aid, and the highest and most beautiful forms of divine love to which it is possible to ascend. Impersonal love fulfilled in the most elevated form may indeed rightly fill both heart and mind of all who engage together in the chanting of this Affirmation and Invocation of Divine Love and, if the word be permitted, “togetherness.”

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

The suggestions made thus far may perhaps sufficiently serve to indicate certain ideals of heart and mind which may happily be followed not only throughout the rest of the Holy Eucharist, but on *all occasions* when the priestly Office is being fulfilled. Congregations, whether small or large, may in their turn accept and apply the ideas advanced, particularly those of self-unification with the Celebrant and the fullest participation in thought, word and act in all that is done in the Name of the Lord on behalf of all mankind.

If this approach be acceptable and followed then, whilst due recognition must always be given to those performing clerical tasks, the sense of separateness from Officiants, the Lord Christ, the Angelic Hosts and the Supreme Deity, should be reduced to a minimum. The second sentence in the first paragraph of the Gloria in Excelsis, beginning as it does with the word "We", indicates both the ideal of oneness and the required thought in the minds of all as the *Gloria* is sung.

Most of the main principles have now been enunciated. The remainder of the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist is of so intimate and sacred a character that their application may preferably be left to the Clergy themselves.

The two ideals of unity with and openheartedness towards Almighty God and of self-purification throughout the whole of human nature are so greatly accentuated in the Collects, the *Munda Cor Meum*, the offering of the chalice, the second censuring, the *Lavabo* and the *Orate Fratres*, as to

both indicate the importance of the ideals and draw attention to their acceptance and adoption at the performance of important priestly functions. Not only at those times, however, but as far as is practicable, the same procedures should have their places in the hearts and minds of the Clergy throughout all the days of their lives. This last, surely, is of very great importance; for an ideal Priest is not only a priest when at the Altar but always, day by day and year by year.

If this be acceptable, then a Priest lives a truly Priestly life day by day and is, in consequence, both ever available as a channel in the service of the Lord and ever alert in readiness to serve individuals and groups in that dedicated and even sacramental capacity. This, surely, is true not only when alone and perhaps during those silences into which he becomes accustomed to retire, but *whenever he finds himself with another person or a group of fellow human beings*. Eventually, one may assume, the ideal Priest becomes as a center through which divine power and blessing and Christlike love and helpfulness are continually flowing forth, radiating indeed, upon the whole world.

Such, indeed, if one may so presume, is the life of the Blessed Lord Himself, but also of all those to whom St. Paul refers as the "spirits of just men made perfect."¹ This ideal would seem to be most beautifully and perfectly expressed in the benediction with which the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist is concluded.

¹ Heb. XII:23.

“The Peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of His Son, Christ our Lord, and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you, always.”

AMEN.

CHAPTER V

COLLECTS, EPISTLE, GRADUAL

THE COLLECTS

Since certain Collects are regularly and very frequently repeated, the danger exists that maximum attention be paid to the words themselves rather than to complete realization of their meaning and to their repetition with full intent concerning their purpose. Many Collects and other prayers either open or close with Invocations to the Blessed Trinity, the Lord Christ, the World Mother or the Saints, for example, and it is most important that as the invocatory words are uttered and the holy Names repeated, the Officiant should direct his thought clearly to Them. As heretofore suggested, anything like a too rapid and somewhat perfunctory repetition of prayers must be zealously avoided. The closing word AMEN has *mantric* (spiritual and occult) power, by virtue of its sound as well as its meaning. Both Clergy and Congregation should always pronounce this word carefully and with as humble intent that the purpose of the prayer be fulfilled.

THE EPISTLE

A period of time is now granted to the Officiant in which to some extent bodily and mental quietude and rest are permitted, even whilst the words of the Epistle are being followed. The mind must not be allowed to wander unduly away from the Service, from unity with the Lord Christ and the Congregation and from the ideal of pure and perfect channelship for spiritual

benediction to those present and to humanity as a whole. A special intent for a special day may also be usefully held in mind, again, with the silent prayer that the purpose may be richly fulfilled. Needless to say, the Offering by all of thanks to God which follows the Epistle, should be wholeheartedly repeated.

THE GRADUALS

The wording of the Graduals is so beautiful and their meanings so profound that special instruction concerning them to both Clergy and laity should ideally be given. The not unnatural tendency of the latter to regard them as portions of the Service, to be followed without due or deep understanding, may very usefully be corrected. On the Sunday before each proper Gradual and Preface of the Season, a Sermon of explanation and advice in participation might well be delivered; for this purpose the Preacher must necessarily become as fully informed as possible.

THE GRADUAL FOR CHRISTMAS DAY AND ITS OCTAVE

The beautiful words of this Gradual may readily be understood in their normal meanings, but the deep inner, mystical meanings, attributable to *all* Nativities of Saviors may also very usefully be explained. St. Paul's numerous references to the Christ Indwelling may well be repeated, including more especially: "I travail in birth again that the Christ be formed in you."¹ Such guidance need not of course reduce the degree of reverence for the historical Nativity,

¹ St. Paul *Gal.* 4:19.

the Holy Mother and the Christ Child born of Her. Neither need the homely and even simple joys, when freed of cruelty associated with Christmas time, be reduced. On the contrary, the Christmas Season may be enriched as an experience, if to the historical occasion there be added the domestic happiness and a realization and a recollection of the Christ Indwelling and what may perhaps be named "the Christmas of the Soul."

The Preface tends to support this approach with its references to the illumination of the mind and the gladdening of the heart with love and joy. Especial reference may here usefully be made to the closing words of the Gradual for Christmas and the Collect which precedes the Epistle, with their elevation of heart and mind in response to the thought of the "Glory to God in the highest." These should be far more than uttered words or even thoughts, but also as aids to the upliftment of heart and mind in recognition of the wondrous glory of the Lord God. The fullest assent and united aspiration should also be unfailingly given to the prayer for peace on Earth whenever it is repeated, for by so doing, Christianity and devout Christians may powerfully contribute to the establishment of "peace on earth amongst men of good will," as indeed also the reduction and even removal of so many other evils.

THE GRADUAL FOR EASTER DAY

The above suggestions apply equally to this beautiful Gradual which, however, may need to be explained to Congregations, notably in Sermons on preceding Sundays. The body is the

real tomb of the Soul of man and ascension from it is an allegory of the attainment of "the perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."¹

THE GRADUAL FOR ASCENSION DAY

This Gradual also offers valuable opportunities for spiritually educative interpretations in similar vein. The accent is however placed upon the exaltation of final liberation from both the restrictions of bodily life and the limitations of human nature itself. The almost universal doctrine of the perfectability of man may be well, but briefly expounded in preparatory Sermons and not only those which precede Easter and Ascension Day, but on other occasions as well.

Advice may also be offered to those of a meditative temperament, to use the Gradual and Prefaces as directions and aids in the daily contemplation, which the Christian life should always include. Thus, not only on Sundays at Church Services, but always and day-by-day, self-refinement, self-upliftment and self-establishment in thought and knowledge of the Lord God and His Holy Angels, the Blessed Mother—the Lady Mary—and the Lord Jesus Christ, may be attained; for this truly is a most important part of the Christian life.

¹ St. Paul, *Eph.* 4:13

CHAPTER VI

MUNDA COR MEUM, GOSPEL

The meaning of this prayer and its place in the Service, exemplify the suggestions made in this booklet as guidance in the attainment of ideal Priesthood. Before reading the holy Gospel, the Gospeller duly prepares his heart—presumably meaning his motives and attitude of mind—his lips and his voice and his whole procedure in reading the Gospel in readiness for the privileged task of reading aloud the words of the Lord Christ. With extensions to include the whole physical body, its personal clothing and Vestments, this prayer might well be uttered with deep intent before leaving the Vestry and participating in a Service in the Church.

The Celebrant assists the Gospeller in his own endeavors and in his appeal to the Lord in attaining to that condition of mind, heart and voice that they may become perfect channels for the Love and Power of God to the Congregation and indeed to the whole world. The Celebrant in his turn should ideally understand the full significance and potentiality of the blessing and especially of the purposes and effects of the two Signs of the Cross which are appropriately made. Under such conditions the Gospeller would surely arise from his knees purified and blessed throughout his whole nature and so made worthy to proclaim the Holy Gospel. In the absence of assistance, the Celebrant utters both prayers and makes the two Signs of the Cross over himself, the results also being partly proportionate to the

spiritual and mental intent with which the prayers are said.

Turning to the Congregation, the Gospeller invokes the Divine Presence upon all who have attended, each person ideally responding within the full implications of the words of response. All too often, it may happen, this beautiful unification of Priest and people and the two-fold Invocation of blessing may be uttered without full realization of the profound nature of each of them. The attainment of the perfect Invocation and perfect response may be aided by regular practice apart from the Service itself, a reasonably sensitive Officiant becoming aware of the benediction invoked upon him by the Clergy and Congregation.

The term "the Lord" in the Invocation presumably refers to both the Creative Deity and His representation and Presence within every human being, "The God that worketh in you" of St. Paul.¹ Such very lofty aspirations and supplications can surely never be regarded too seriously since the very highest Powers in the Universe and man are called into the acts of mutual benediction. Especially, would it seem to be important, that he who utters the first great prayer should do so with both full intent and thorough understanding of the nature of his act. If it be otherwise, then a most sacred utterance, moment and relationship may pass by without due recognition of their significance—a very great loss.

Again, it may here be repeated that such ideals of the priestly life should not only be practised

¹ *Phil.* 2:12

before and during Church Services, but should increasingly become essential and veritable parts of the daily life and character of the ideal Priest. Indeed, thus viewed, no experience and very few actions can be wholly divorced from the way of life of him or her who seeks to "enter in at the strait gate,"¹ and tread "the narrow way."² Thus, the Priesthood is in truth a way of life."

THE GOSPEL IS ANNOUNCED

The Priest turns left to face the people. Touching the Gospel book with his left hand, he reads the announcement appearing at the beginning of the Gospel: *The Holy Gospel is taken from . . .* As he says these words, he stretches out the right hand, palm downwards, fingers closed, and makes the sign of the cross with the extended thumb at the beginning of the text of the Gospel he is about to read. The server and people say: *Glory be to Thee, O Lord.* Immediately he makes the Sign of the Cross, quite small, and still with the right thumb, upon his forehead, lips and breast successively, the left hand now resting upon the breast a little below the place where he is to make the Sign of the Cross. Now taking the thurible from the server, the Priest censens the Book with six short swings, two towards the center of the Book, two towards the left and two towards the right side. The Priest now hooks the thurible ring over the server's finger and proceeds to read the Gospel.

Whilst suggestions have already been made concerning the spiritual and material purposes for and effects produced by making the Sign of

¹ Matt. 7:13

² Matt. 7:14

the Cross, further comments may here usefully be made since the sacred Sign is made over specific parts of the human body, with the right thumb upon the forehead, lips and breast successively.

Members of the Congregation are well advised in their turn to make themselves well informed concerning the reasons for this practice—notably as regards the parts of the body over which the Cross is made—and pay full attention to their actions whilst the advised procedure is being followed. Here again, thorough information should be made available and this knowledge might well be imparted both at Church study classes and in Sermons.

Very briefly, it may here be stated that centers of communication¹ between the spiritual Self of man and the physical body are situated *within* the body at points towards which the thumb is directed whilst making the Signs. The one behind the forehead is a channel of communication for the Intelligence-Aspect of the spiritual Soul, whilst those behind the throat and breast convey the powers of Will and of Wisdom combined with compassionate love, respectively. The effective performance of the prescribed actions would have the effect of rendering these centers of communication more fully open and so more perfectly functioning to link together the Inner and the outer man. If the repetition be pardoned, such Ceremonial acts should never be performed without due recognition of their purpose and the fullest intent that it may be fulfilled.

¹ *Chakras*, see *The Chakras*, C. W. Leadbeater.

Evidently, then, in the minds of those who compiled the *Liturgy* containing these directions, the reading and the hearing of the Gospel are of very great importance. This is understandable, since the very words of the Lord Christ, as far as they have been handed down to us are spoken by the Gospeller and heard by those present. The Lord Himself thus approaches very closely through His words and their meanings to those present, speaking as it were almost personally to each one.

The cleansing of the Gospeller and the Gospel itself by means of the incense and later the Congregation, together with the accompanying Ritual acts are doubtless designed to prepare the Officiant, the Church, the Sacred Scripture and the Congregation, and to produce the maximum results from the near Presence of the Lord Christ as through the voice of the Gospeller, His words resound throughout the Church.

This is indeed a solemn and sacred time within the larger Ceremony at which whilst seated for the Epistle in a physically restful pause, the Holy Gospel is read according to immemorial custom. In this spirit, therefore, the beautiful Gospel Ceremonial may well be regarded, responded to and received by all who are present. The privilege of the Gospeller himself as the "Voice" by means of which the words of the Christ are heard is thus seen to be very great indeed. In consequence, the expressions of thanksgiving by means of the words "Glory be to Thee, O Lord," before the reading and "Praise be to Thee, O Christ," at the end are most appropriate.

Whilst it is important that no undue significance should be given to a physical object for its own sake, objects which have been Consecrated, blessed and regularly used for spiritual purposes, do possess a certain especial value not only in themselves but as centers of the radiation of spiritualizing energies. The human Race, whilst passing through the present era of the development of the mind, has obviously fallen into grievous—if ultimately educative—errors which gravely darken life on our Earth. Every spiritual and so remedial influence which can be brought to bear upon mankind—and highly charged symbols have this power—are of the greatest value; for they are centers of radiation of purifying and elevating forces. Taking care of recognition of their value, those who are responsible for and frequently handle such objects should, surely, always do so with great respect if not reverence and devoted care.

A book from which the Holy Gospels are regularly read and in the Liberal Catholic Church regularly purified by censuring and blessed by the imposition of the Sign of the Cross, mentally acquire a certain addition of spiritual power to the physical substance of which they are formed and so, in their turn, become centers of radiation in addition to their printed contents, such as the teachings and words of the Lord Christ Himself and the ideas they evoke. Whilst it is of the utmost importance that this approach should never be carried to an extreme as to justify the term “fetishism,” does it not seem desirable therefore, that such a Volume, having acquired special spiritual associations and properties, should be somewhat kept apart and used

largely as a book from which the Gospels are regularly read? Books can be regarded as almost “living” objects in that they are vehicles for thought and possibly associated in some way with the author of those thoughts. If so, regular ceremonial use of such a book may endow it with such attributes as might seem to justify its reservation for the one purpose and appropriate treatment as a Volume of the Sacred Law.

If a Sermon is to follow, it might aptly and usefully include advice as to the procedures associated with the reading of the Gospel. Even so, much fuller instruction, necessarily taking more time, may well form part of the general guidance made available to the Congregations. This is indeed important, if only for the two reasons that no Ritual act should ever be perfunctorily performed and all present who are so moved—each being free—may be taught how to respond as fully as possible to the wise and inspiring guidance of our Mother, the Church.

CHAPTER VII

CREDO, OFFERTORIUM, SECOND CENSING, ORATE FRATRES, PREFACE, SANCTUS

At this place in the Service, each and every individual present assumes full responsibility for the words which are uttered. The external Officiant is here completely replaced by the conscience, understanding, knowledge, and, should they exist, intuitive perceptions concerning the meaning of the uttered words of all others who are present.

In this, also, members of the Congregation—as indeed even of the Clergy—greatly need guidance in order that the Confession of Faith may be intelligently and sincerely made. Classes may well be held for these purposes and Sermons delivered, so that in this also, the extremely important statement, be genuinely and sincerely made and never become a mere reading and speaking of words behind which little or no real understanding or even meaning exist for the person who is standing upright before the Altar of the Lord.¹

When the closing sentence is repeated and the Sign of the Cross made over the person as directed, the full significance of the symbol and the action should ideally always be remembered

¹ *The Three Aspects of the Christ*, A. Besant; *The Science of the Sacraments*, C. W. Leadbeater and *The Hidden Wisdom in the Holy Bible*, Vol. I, Geoffrey Hodson, provide guidance in these respects, as does also the literature of the Liberal Catholic Church.

and applied. The word *Amen* should similarly be uttered with the fullest possible intent, since a solemn statement of personal belief is by this word receiving its confirmation.

OFFERTORIUM

Since this prayer begins with the unifying word “We,” which is also required five times during the offering, both Celebrant and all others present should consciously become as one. Particularly should the Celebrant take care mentally to include every member of the Clergy and laity present at the Service whilst he repeats the words and performs the exceedingly sacred preparatory action of offering bread and wine to be transubstantiated into the living Presence and Power of the Lord Christ.

THE SECOND CENSING

All that has hitherto been suggested concerning the blessing by means of a prayer and the Sign of the Cross and the ceremonial use of the incense here especially applies. Whilst assurance of the absolute purity of the bread and the wine at mental, emotional, and physical levels is difficult to obtain—if only because of their previous passage through many hands of many persons—the act of the second censuring, performed with full knowledge and intent achieves the closest possible approach to such an ideal.

As in the *Offertorium*, so now and throughout the whole of the acts of the Consecration and Administration of the Blessed Sacrament, the Celebrant should do his best always to include all present as if each one were participating with him in these most holy and most sacred priestly

duties. The Clergy and the laity may well be guided by means of group teaching and Sermons in unifying themselves with the Celebrant up to and even after the uplifting experience of the reception of the Blessed Sacrament. Followed by silence of hearts and minds, save for adoration and gratitude, may best become all who have thus been so highly privileged and so richly blessed.

Fortunately, this idea of remembered unity of the Holy Spirit within all men, and so of oneness with the Celebrant and each other, is encouraged by the prayers which follow, including especially the *Orate Fratres*, *Sursum Corda* and the Preface. The Closing words of this prayer of gratitude are uplifting indeed, since the thoughts of all present are lifted towards the Supreme Deity and the nine Orders of the Angelic Hosts.

Those who by temperament are thus moved and are devout by nature—differences of temperament are fully recognized throughout this work—may well use many of the prayers and such concepts as are remembered in the Preface for purposes of meditation and intuitive perception, apart from the Services themselves. This may well be carried out with the twofold objective of experienced unity with the Lord God, His Son the Lord Christ, and the Angelic Hosts, including the Blessed Lady Mary and greater efficiency in participation at the Services themselves.

Whilst the demands made upon almost every human being throughout the procedures of daily living are in no wise forgotten, it is nevertheless true that the Christian life is indeed a life of self-consecration, contemplation and serv-

ice. The regular practice of meditation upon the sublime truths of the Christian Faith and their many Ritual presentations, including those herein considered, has and does indeed bring about a "saturation"¹—if such a word may be here used—of heart and mind with the very spirit of Christianity.

The words of the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus Qui Venit*, are especially suitable and likely to be particularly helpful in these respects as also in the Service itself, particularly when the full meaning is given to the language of the Prayers and to the Sign of the Cross which is made as the word Hosanna is sung. This most potent ceremonial act assists in opening, as it were, the whole heart and mind to the realization of the glory of the Lord.

¹ Brother Lawrence, "He who is possessed by the gale of the Holy Spirit, goes forward even in sleep," *The Practice of the Presence of God*.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION ADESTE FIDELES, THE PRAYER OF OFFERING

The writings of the late Bishop C. W. Leadbeater, especially in his truly great book *The Science of the Sacraments*, provide almost complete guidance to Celebrants in the performance of this central act of the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist, as of so very much else concerning the Ceremonies, Feast-days and other associated Rites appropriate to each of them. All who are interested are strongly recommended carefully to study the writings of this truly great servant of the Lord and of his fellow men.

The utterance of the prayer of Consecration and the performance of the designated observances are surely sufficient in themselves to demand and to obtain the full attention, intent and most reverent state of mental and physical awareness. Perfunctory actions are indeed rendered virtually incenseivable. Nevertheless, deep meditation is solemnly counselled upon every sentence and its meaning and upon every action and its significance and designed effects.

All that has heretofore been said concerning the importance of the ideal state of mind and perfectly performed actions, very fully applies to the Prayer of Consecration. This especially concerns the offering, purification and hallowing of the Oblations as earthly channels of God's

wondrous Power. Prayers, also, for the aid of others, including those especially named, should naturally be said with the fullest possible concentration upon the attainment of maximum "descent" of divine power and healing Grace and their efficient direction to those whose names are mentioned as being in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversity. The deceased who have been delivered from the burden of the flesh are particularly receptive of and responsive to the very great benediction and upliftment which the mention in their superphysical bodies of their names and thought of them most surely make available.

The deeply privileged utterance of the Prayer to the holy Lord, Father Almighty, to look down on and accept as a channel the Oblations of bread and wine, uttered with the hands of the Celebrant spread over the Offerings, can hardly fail to awaken in him the very deepest and humblest reverence and fullest intent to be a most perfect channel for the assured responses from on high. The five Signs of the Cross in their turn each need to be most correctly made, as do the two which follow during the description of the action of the Lord Christ at the Last Supper.

The transcendent procedure of the transubstantiation of the elements by the Lord Christ Himself are said to occur whilst the Celebrant utters the consecrating words "body" and "blood." Beyond suggesting that—whatever language may be used—these two words be repeated with great care and perfection, the author feels unworthy and unable to advise concerning the ideal state of consciousness appropriate to so very wonder-

ful and privileged occasion and Office. The genuflections and elevations which follow both words, would themselves seem perfectly to describe symbolically the states of heart and mind which are evoked and produced as these portions of the great Prayer are uttered. Indeed, silence may best become both the Celebrant at this time and the author of this book concerning so deeply sacred a religious Ceremony.

The advised moments of silent adoration and the very soft singing of the *Te Adoremus* and the short pause which follow, both serve to guide all who are present in the reverent recognition of the Presence of the Lord Christ which has now been made manifest.

ADESTE FIDELES

The beautiful music and the most elevating lines of this wonderful call to the faithful to adore Him who is Monarch of the Angels, together with the choirs of Angels and all the citizens of heaven above—so joyously familiar to many Christians from childhood—serve to guide and direct the worship which has been invoked, as also may the standing posture to which all are called. Further comment is surely quite unnecessary, could indeed be almost an impertinence; for verily these most solemn and sacred Ceremonials call to all Christians who take part in them to give fullest heed to all that is being done. The suggestion may, however, perhaps be appropriate that both classes of instruction and Sermons of guidance could be most helpful to those seeking the fullest participation in the Services of the Church.

In this beautiful and spiritually powerful Prayer, the highest aspirations and the united thoughts of Celebrant and people are addressed to the Lord and heavenly Father in gratitude for the wondrous gift which has been bestowed in response to the Prayer of Consecration. Furthermore, in token of the love, devotion and sacrifice of hearts and minds, the precious gift is offered unto Him. The ministration of the Lord's Holy Angel is sought so that the Oblation may be borne to the Altar on high, doubtless symbolizing the most intimate Presence of the Lord God Himself.¹ Thereafter, the aid of the Lord Christ as the eternal High Priest is sought that He may make the ultimate and most intimately direct presentation of the transubstantiated Oblations in fulfillment of His Office of eternal High Priest, Who forever offers Himself as the eternal Sacrifice.

In this most deeply mystical and devout Prayer, with all its spiritual idealism, the unity of Celebrant and Congregation is again made clear and should therefore be held in mind by all present. The deeply interior significance of the procedure designated in the Prayer surely calls for much meditative thought in order that the Offering may be as fully as possible understood and made by the Celebrant on behalf of his people. A complete surrender is made of the blessings bestowed and an uttermost trust that they will indeed reach the Altar and the very Presence of the Three Persons of the Blessed

¹ I refrain from suggesting possible spiritual implications of this very mystical and even mysterious procedure, believing that each one will find and follow their own interpretations of the sacred mystery represented in these prayers.

Trinity, in consequence of the invoked aid of the Angel of God and of His Son, the Lord Christ Himself.

Whilst all prayers call for the deepest dedication and fullest understanding by the Celebrant, this particular Prayer of Offering surely calls for that meditative study and intuitive understanding as a result of which alone a Priest may fulfill the task implied in this most mystical Prayer.

The Congregation is then offered the special opportunity of praying to the Lord Most High that the Celebrant himself may be filled with God's mighty power and blessing. Here again, if the repetition may be pardoned, guidance to the Congregation would seem to be greatly needed if the hopes and the promises of all present are to be fulfilled. Truly, as one studies the *Liturgy* and especially certain Prayers such as these, one becomes deeply impressed with the conviction that such words should never be either uttered lightly, or without the fullest possible comprehension of their import and intent. How otherwise, one feels moved to ask, may one worthily participate in the Services of the Church if one has not been at considerable pains to understand and comply with the lofty purposes which are involved?

The Celebrant is then granted the opportunity of repeating a special Prayer for the "people here present," asking that they may be hallowed, quickened and blessed, and that both in their hearts and in their lives they may "show forth Thy praise and glorify Thy holy Name." Of considerable interest and possibly valuable instruction is the liturgical method followed, that neither the Celebrant nor the people directly ask

for divine gifts on their own behalf; for thereby the most complete impersonality and freedom from self-seeking and self-praise are inculcated. This selflessness is indeed the very quality which should become established as part of the characters of all who would consciously enter into mystial communion with the most holy Lord and Father of All and with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

The opportunities—even “demands” if they be so accepted—offered to the Celebrant in the closing passages of this great Prayer of Offering are almost unlimited. His words, and so ideally his thoughts, become centered upon the Cosmic Christ as the Fashioner of Universes, the Source of the indwelling life by which all things exist and the transcendent glory by means of which all things live and move and have their being. Since at his Ordination, the Priest was intimately linked with the Lord Christ in his three Aspects of Cosmic, Mystic and Historical *Christos*, by means of preparatory meditations and especial evocation into full activity of this interior union and communion with the Lord, the Celebrant is enabled both to enlarge his own consciousness at every Celebration and to illumine the minds of all others present with the realization of the Lord Christ as the Divinity indwelling within each and every one of them. The prescribed observances which include making the Sign of the Cross with the Host over the Chalice and with the Chalice itself over his breast further aid and bless the Celebrant. His spiritual life is thus still more deeply enriched and these are benedictions which are naturally shared with all who are participating in the Service.

Whilst concentration upon correct procedures and contemplation upon the profound significance of the mystical meaning of the words and signs, necessarily occupy the consciousness of the Priest, the opportunity of sharing all these blessings with his people will always be greatly increased when he is also able to remember and deeply comprehend by virtue of experience these privileges and opportunities pertaining to his Office.

CHAPTER IX

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE SAINTS, THE SALUTATION OF PEACE

Here, for the first time in the Shorter Form of the Holy Eucharist, the holy Lady Mary, Mother of Jesus, beatified and crowned, is introduced into the Service. Guidance in classes and Sermons may, in consequence, be very usefully offered so that Priest and Congregation may comprehend the Principle of the Feminine Aspect of Deity to whom reference is also made in the Religions of ancient Egypt, India and the Far East. Whether as a personification of the ever-receptive, all-productive "Sea" of Space as the name "Mary" or "Mare" indicates, or as the adored Lady Mary, Treasure of all that is beautiful, loving, tender and true and consoler, supporter and healer of all who are suffering afflictions, gratitude is offered to Her at this most sacred part of the Ceremony. The more deeply, therefore, that the mystery of Her radiant existence be understood, the more fully and worthily will the gratitude of Her subjects be offered to Her.¹

The Communion of the Saints from the beginning of the world also receives the gratitude of those who have been recipients of divine blessing through Them as "the choice vessels of Thy (the Lord Most High) grace and a shining light

¹ See *The World Mother as Symbol and Fact*, C. W. Leadbeater.

unto many generations," St. Paul's words: "To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."¹

THE BREAKING OF THE HOST

At the Prayer which begins with the words, "Son of God . . .," the Celebrant here performs a further profoundly significant action; for the breaking of the newly Consecrated Host, first into two parts and thereafter from one of them into a third, may be interpreted primarily as the voluntary threefold manifestation of That Which is forever One in order that Universes may Emanate from the Absolute. The threefold, formative functions are fulfilled of Fashioner, Preserver and Perfector of objective Universes and all that they contain and produce. The following words of this profoundly mystical Prayer are then uttered and a third particle is broken off and allowed to fall into the wine within the Chalice, doubtless to indicate the "sacrificial" entry of the divine Life and Presence into every particle or atom of all worlds and all beings.

A careful study of Cosmogenesis from both the Occult and the modern scientific points of view is quite necessary for the Priest who wishes himself fully to understand the meaning of this Prayer and associated Observances and so be fully aware of the reason behind his words and deeds at this point of the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist. If, furthermore, he decides to instruct his people so that they also may comprehend the

¹ *Hebrews*, Ch. 12:23.

divine mystery which is being enacted in their presence, he will indeed find it very necessary to ensure that he himself is as fully informed as possible.¹

Meditation upon both the Divine Immanence and the Christ Indwelling may most usefully—necessarily, indeed—be followed to the end of the deepening of understanding of this wonderful Prayer. This can then be shared with the Congregation, and so their fullest cooperation be gained in this most philosophical, sacred and spiritual part of the Ceremony. The three Signs of the Cross which are made call not only for a measure of understanding of the meaning of these actions, but as always, exactitude of movement of the hand in the actual formation of the Symbol.

THE SALUTATION OF PEACE

The effectiveness of both the Invocation of the peace of the Lord upon the people and of their response on behalf of the Celebrant will, as heretofore suggested, depend upon an understanding of the meaning of the words and the degree of intent which mentally accompanies the utterance of the prescribed Prayers and Responses. Not only certain individuals in the Congregation, but many of the world's inhabitants suffer from disease, discomfort and anxiety. As these prayers and the responses are uttered, reassurance, confidence, intuitively perceived wisdom in solving difficulties, comfort and even healing grace may

¹ See *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, H. P. Blavatsky and various Commentaries upon this work, including *The Hidden Wisdom in the Holy Bible*, Vol. II, Geoffrey Hodson.

descend upon or rise within many minds and hearts.

As in all ceremonial, it may here be repeated, a close relationship exists between the effects produced by a ritual action and the understanding, thoughtfulness and strong intent with which the sentences are repeated and the major and minor observances carried out.

PRAYER THAT THE BLESSING OF HOLY COMMUNION MAY BE FULLY RECEIVED

As the words of the Prayer which immediately follows the salutation of peace indicate, the attention of all present is directed in thanksgiving and Invocation to both the Lord Christ in His Own wondrous Person, and also to His unfailing Presence within every human being, the Christ Indwelling. Since the concept that at least a two-fold self-manifestation of the Lord—from heaven above and from within the human heart—may be unfamiliar to many Christians and indeed somewhat difficult to comprehend, guidance in this also may very usefully be made available.

The goal before all who would know and live the mystic life is to enter into ever-deepening experience of the Divine Presence ever shining at the “heart” of each and every human being. This experience is normally dependent upon contemplation of that Presence, beginning with and based upon an intellectual grasp of its significance and followed in mental silence by the union of the Soul of the devotee as if in a celestial “marriage” with the One Lord of All, Who referred to Himself as the Bridegroom. The Parable of The Wise and Foolish Virgins may

be helpfully interpreted as descriptive of the two differing types of human beings, the unprepared and unspiritualized on the one hand and the duly prepared and deeply spiritualized devotee, on the other.

Admittedly, this experience is entered into at those inmost realms of human awareness and even existence where attempted reasoning cannot penetrate. Hence, presumably, the words of the Lord God to the Psalmist: "Be still and know that I am God."¹ In truth, the contemplative procedure known as the "Practice of the Presence of God,"² as also other methods which are designed to lead to the same attainment belong to a particular system of inward prayer and aspirations by means of which it becomes possible to participate, however partially, in the experience which enabled the Lord Christ to proclaim, "I and My Father are One"³ and "I am in My Father and ye in Me and I in you."⁴

The aspirant to this experience which is far beyond the possibility of description in words must seek to liberate himself or herself from the domination of the mind; for in truth, valuable beyond price though it be, the mind itself is powerless either to enter into the sublimity of experienced union with God and His Son Christ Our Lord and also even to describe or disclose in words the nature of that experience. In this, the form of guidance will consist not only of such instruction but also of guided meditation offered to those whose hearts are indeed burning with longing

¹ Ps. 46:10

² Brother Lawrence

³ Jn. 10:30

⁴ Jn. 14:20

for union with the great Lord of Wisdom, Compassion and All-embracing Love. Thus aided, an increasing number of members of Clergy and laity alike may be helped to that which may truthfully be described as *the heart of all Religions*, namely experienced union with God and through Him with all that lives.

This surely, must also be severally implied by the Consecration of the Blessed Sacrament, the spiritual Presence of the Lord Christ, which has become incarnate within it, its administration and its reception by Communicants which is about to follow. The silence into which one may fall as one continues briefly to kneel and then returns to one's seat, may so often exemplify that stillness of mind in which—and it is taught, without which—spiritual communion with the Holiest may be known. All too often, it is feared, this valued inward stillness becomes disturbed, if not lost, except by those who are able to sustain it, whether by the power of the experience itself or as a result of wisely guided and wisely followed self-training. The opportunity and the responsibility if he cares so to regard it, of the Pastor of his flock, are very great indeed and, may it not be said especially concerning those moments which follow the receiving of the Blessed Sacrament.

After he himself has communicated in both kinds and administered to the Clergy and Servers, the Priest blesses the people with a particle saying: "Ye that desire to partake of the body of the Lord, draw nigh and receive this most holy Sacrament." As he administers the Holy Communion to each, the Priest says: "The body of Our Lord Christ keep thee unto life eternal."

This surely is the consummation towards which the whole Service has been leading and calls for the most perfect channelship of Our Lord's blessing by the Priest, and the most devout and faithful and grateful reception by each communicant. In this, one assumes the most valuable parts of the instruction given by the Priest to his people is to be found and to this end, surely, the whole of his own dedication and prayer needs to be offered in order that his channelship and the mind-heart of the communicant may be as appropriately perfect as possible. Whilst hardly possible at regular Services, permitted and even guided periods of silent adoration may well be made available to smaller groups and to individual communicants.

At both the Invitation to partake of the Blessed Sacrament and at its Administration, the Priest should also advisedly practise the most intimate spiritual unity with the Congregation of which he is capable. The ideal is a complete experience of unity with each and all of those present, every Communicant being regarded by the Priest as at one with him and he at one with them.

Admittedly, extreme physical care and concentration upon correct procedure must be in the forefront of the consciousness of the Priest especially at the most important parts of the Celebration. It is, however, part of his special privilege and of the "training" which regular fulfillment of the Office of Priesthood provides, namely to practise and increasingly experience a dual unity with Our Lord and with every Communicant. Needless to say, this is a deeply interior experience in which no slightest room exists for

any personal feelings and attachments whatsoever. In consequence, the spiritual expansion of consciousness and the correct mental and physical actions may proceed, together and at the same time. This refers to the inmost "art" of the successful Ritualist who by such forms of self-training and as a result of such opportunities offered by frequent fulfillment of his Office, may attain to ever increasing realization of spiritual oneness with the Lord Christ Himself and also with all members of the human Race. This will one day culminate in the attainment of a unity with one's fellowmen which will be so close as to constitute that almost indescribable experience referred to by the Lord Christ in His recently quoted words, "I am in My Father and you in Me and I in you."¹

As will be realized, this constitutes the highest attainment, not only available to the ideal Priest but also to all those who would—perhaps by other routes—arrive at the same degree of spiritual illumination.

Whilst advancing such a view, the author is in no way losing sight of the fact here repeated that the perfect physical performance of Ritual is in itself an ideal to be sought, and that no mental states should be allowed for one moment to reduce the necessary degree of physical awareness and efficiency. Nevertheless, the fulfillment of the priestly Office can also become—and the author ventures to say "should become"—the aspiration of such Priests who by temperament find themselves naturally moved by aspiration increasingly to achieve such spiritual attainment.

¹ *Jn.* 14:20

CHAPTER X

UNDER THE VEIL

POSTCOMMUNIO, BENEDICTION

Doubtless, the Celebrant himself and each participant in the deeply sacred Service of Holy Communion, will interpret the words of this beautiful and significant address to all Communicants according to temperament and inward response to the Administration of the Blessed Sacrament. The opening words themselves would seem to suggest a deeply interior contemplation of the inestimable privilege of "communion with Our Lord Jesus Christ." If this be so, then behind or under the veil of external, physical, emotional and mental awareness and experience, deep within the sanctuary of the inmost Soul, the Christ Indwelling will be revealed "with open face," and the whole being "rejoicing in His glory will be made like unto Him."

If one may venture to interpret these beautiful words—and so to indicate a desired attitude of heart and mind in Priest and Communicant alike—then an inward resolve that the whole personality or outer vesture of the Soul shall from this most sacred moment onwards be made more and more like unto the Lord Christ, for His "body" has been received by the outermost expression of the God within man, namely the vesture of flesh, the physical body. Ideally, the whole mind-heart should in perfect stillness then dwell with gratitude and joy at the privilege thus afforded.

Truly, these personal thoughts of the author have of necessity been expressed in words and no words can really and fully describe and express that wordless or indescribable state of being into which one can enter at and after Holy Communion. Perhaps stillness alone can enable one to hear and appreciate that which is as if spoken by "the still small voice."¹ Was it not after the earthquake, the wind and the fire that in the silence which followed, Elijah heard the still small voice of the Lord? So also, may it not be felt that silence best becomes one as the Blessed Sacrament is received and one kneels for a few moments afterwards and then returns to one's seat, there to continue that incommunicable and deeply secret communion with "the Christ in you, the hope of Glory."²

COMMUNIO

Ceremonial observance here asks that all stand and sing the beautiful words of Ascription to God forever and ever, of the very highest attributions, including thanksgiving, profoundly affirmed by all at the utterance of the word *Amen*, both before and after this ascription.

POST COMMUNIO

As he speaks the first word of this prayer, "We," the Priest will naturally unify himself with all present, as indeed the word itself asks of him. Nevertheless, advice may perhaps usefully be here repeated that the lofty form of spiritual contemplation be practised which is realization in

¹ *Kn.* 19:12

² *Col.* 1:27

ever deepening degree of unity with all those present, drawing each and every one through himself into the intimate oneness with his Lord which he was so privileged to receive at his Ordination. As far as freedom from the necessary physical concentration upon his priestly Office at this moment in the Service will allow, the experience of oneness and the intimate enfolding of all present into the love and life of Our Lord Christ may even be extended to include all mankind; for this, surely, is the highest and first consideration of every servant of the Savior of the whole world, namely that by continued contemplation of the truth of the unity of the life in all men, ever deepening experience of that truth shall be attained. The Priest may, perhaps, make for himself a list of Gospel affirmations in which the Lord Christ affirmed His love and His oneness with every member of the human Race. One such affirmation of both unity with, and concern for, all mankind used for this purpose might will be, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."¹

Again, all present are led to pray to the Lord—and doubtless to resolve—that "Thy grace may be so grafted inwardly in our hearts that it may continually be made manifest in our lives." Not only during each Service and at all times of the reception of such great blessings, but at all times this prayer and others point to the importance of both permitting and insuring that

¹ *Jn.* 10:16 and *Jn.* 18:37, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

the privilege received shall continually affect one's very life and so not only during attendance at Church Services.

This most important aspect of the religious life may well also be stressed by the Priest, as he both teaches his people in classes of guidance and the Sermons which he delivers. Frequently has it been said, the life of the servant of the Lord must not be divided into Sunday and week-days with all that these two terms imply, but rather consist of a natural continuance of both recollection and practice, as far as the demands of life and of human nature itself, may permit. Here, one may remember the words of Brother Lawrence who wrote, "He who is possessed by the gale of the Holy Spirit, goes forward even in sleep."¹

ITE MISSA EST

The great Occasion draws to a close. Once again Celebrant and Congregation, ideally by this time spiritually and intellectually unified and in a close mutual relationship, invoke divine blessing upon each other. As ever, this apparently simple, or at least briefly spoken Invocation should be uttered with the fullest possible intent, the Priest himself remembering his especial privilege as Ordained representative of his Master and channel for divine benediction.

The brevity of these two repeated sentences and the fact that they occur several times in the Service might tend to cause them to be spoken rather as part of a Ritual than as a very deeply intended Invocation of blessings from the very

¹ *The Practice of the Presence of God*, Brother Lawrence.

highest Source. Nevertheless, it is permissible to assume that the very words themselves when thus spoken carry with them their own potency and so produce at least an irreducible minimum of response, as is also true of the whole Ritual. The Latin words which precede the final benediction may, it would seem, be variously interpreted. In their outer meaning they simply announce the close of the central part of the great Ceremonial and express the profound gratitude of all who have been privileged to participate.

Members of the company of the Archangels and Angels have, however, attended and greatly assisted in the normally invisible worlds in the attainment of maximum effectiveness and fullest realization of the sublime purposes for which the Rite was long ago established. It is but both a courteous and a necessary signal from their human collaborators to the members of the Angelic Hosts that for a time their mutual activities are now drawn to a close. May not the word *gratias*, which is addressed to the Lord God, also imply a certain grateful recognition of the greatly valued ministration on behalf of mankind for which members of the Angelic Hierarchy have been responsible? Whether this was or was not included in the thoughts of the original writers of the Ceremony, such a thought would not be at all out of place if included in the last opportunity to participate, save in the final *Amen*.

THE MYSTERY TRADITION

The Holy Eucharist is regarded by some scholars as a direct remembrance and continuance of certain parts of the Rituals of the Ancient Mysteries. If this be so—and I find myself giving

ready acceptance to this view—then a direct and very wonderful “legacy” from the past is bestowed upon mankind every time the Holy Eucharist is celebrated. In olden days in Egypt, Greece, Assyria and the countries of the East and Far East, the original forms of certain Ceremonies which are still enacted, were conceived, composed and directed by advanced members of the human Race. Perchance, it is to these great Ones that St. Paul refers in his words “the Just Men made perfect.”¹ This possibility finds a recognized place in the Liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Church, as for example in what is sometimes called “The First Ray Benediction” and named “An Invocation.” In this very remarkable Prayer, aid is invoked on behalf of all those present who aspire to pass through what in ancient days were known as the successive Grades of which the Mysteries were composed. The highest was named being that of Initiation into the Greater Mysteries in contradistinction to the preparatory grades of what were known as the Lesser Mysteries.

Beyond this stage and degree of interior unfoldment, still loftier evolutionary phases may be entered upon with the aid of the Hierophant² and other Officiants; for the great and profoundly impressive Ceremonial both helped towards and recognized the Initiate’s progress towards human perfection or—again quoting St. Paul, reputed to be himself an Initiate—“The measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”³

¹ *Heb.* 12:23

² *Hierophant* (Gr.): “One who explains sacred things.”

³ St. Paul, *Eph.* 4:13

If this be so, then those of us who feel so moved are indeed granted very especial privileges whenever Holy Communion is received and particularly in the Liberal Catholic Church, whose human founders are reputed to be reborn members of the Mysteries of old. Acting under instruction from their own Seniors, as is assumed, they found themselves moved during the years 1916-1917 not only to produce a Ritual in harmony with the title "Liberal," but also one which was related to and emanating from the ceremonies of the Ancient Mysteries.

May it not be that this action in its turn was but a preparatory opening out of the way for the re-establishment amongst mankind of those most beneficent Institutions, with Rituals somewhat, but not too much, revised. If this be so, those who aspire to do so may in modern days find and tread "the way of holiness,"¹ enter in at the strait gate"² and ascend to great spiritual heights along "the narrow way."³ Thus viewed—though in no slightest degree obligatory—the ecclesiastical Hierarchy may be regarded and its members so regard themselves—as did the Hierophants and other Officiants in the temples, sanctuaries and crypts in which the Ancient Mysteries were enacted. The ideal Priest, thus envisaged, might possibly be regarded as one who having entered the service of the Church and progressed to the Priesthood deepened his dedication, widened his thinking and performed his duties increasingly in the spirit which is pre-

¹ *Is.* 35:8

² *Matt.* 7:13

³ *Matt.* 7:14

sumed to have animated the corresponding Officials in olden days.¹

THE BENEDICTION

This beautifully worded and most beneficent Prayer must and will naturally be uttered with all the inner dedication and profound spiritual conviction of response of which the Priest is capable. Such response is, indeed, assured even if in some degree according to the measure of dedication and conviction held within the heart and mind of the Priest as on behalf of the Congregation—but surely also that of all mankind—he invokes the divine blessing.

There would, I suggest, seem to be certain prayers in our Liturgy to which rich and even overflowing response, was in the long past ordained. Church Fathers, illumined mystics as they were, sought, it may be assumed, guidance from Members of the Communion of the Just Men made Perfect, both in the wording of such prayers, and if it were possible, in assurance that divine blessings would indeed descend upon and richly fill the hearts and minds of all on whose behalf they are spoken. In consequence, certain resultant Church Services and their Liturgies contain Invocations and Prayers to which spiritual responses are traditionally assured. This, however, does not relieve the Priest from playing his part as channel throughout his whole nature for that peace, protection and living experience

¹ The following books may usefully be studied by those who find themselves somewhat naturally drawn towards this point of view: *The Mysteries of Eleusis*, Meautis; *The Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, Thomas Taylor; *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, H. P. Blavatsky.

of the divine Presence in order that they may in very truth descend upon and become available to his Congregation. Thus, ends the most solemn and most beautiful Ceremonial of the Holy Eucharist in its Shorter Form. Here, also, ends my shared thoughts on the subject of the ideal Priest, which on request, I prepared and do herein respectfully proffer for consideration.

PART II

CHAPTER I

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

All ancient symbols may be studied and regarded from various points of view. The Symbol of the Cross may thus be looked upon:

as a visible representation in a particular form of an inward, invisible force operating under a law which does not change during the active period from the birth and death—Nativity and Ascension—of a Universe;

as a key to unlock a “door” in the mortal mind leading to direct perception of the force or energy and the law under which this force is made to function;

as a means of invoking and directing the self-same force in order that a human purpose may be fulfilled, benediction, for example;

as a means of bringing about a manifestation of the force both within the person who makes the symbol and in the air or object towards which, by will and thought, the force is directed;

as a means of bringing the spiritual Self or Christ Indwelling in man, into manifestation as a spiritualizing power within the “temple” of bodies;

as a means of awakening into activity where necessary and if not so, of increasing, the action and the function of a particular area of one or all of the bodies of mind, emotion or physical substance. This applies more espe-

cially to the “seals”¹ or centers of Soul-energy and communion or *Chakras*² in the super-physical bodies and in the corresponding parts of the physical body and also in the brain; as an exorcizing, purifying and harmonizing agency in preparation for a benediction which is to follow that procedure;

as a mentally held and visualized symbol, built of white light, for example, to aid one in meditation upon the Transcendent and Immanent Deity, the Lord Christ and the representation and Presence of each of These within the spiritual and material parts of every human being.

When correctly conceived in the mind and formed in the air by the right hand, the Symbol of the Cross thus understood and employed, constitutes one of the most powerfully beneficent, spiritualizing agencies known to mankind. Wherever it is thus used, whether by a layman or a Priest, the symbol is of the highest value, being of the greatest spiritualizing efficacy and an ever-available key to the mysterious knowledge and the divine power of the Universe.

In consequence, this symbol should never be made without at least *some* mental recognition of its significance. When vesting, for example—always to be done with due self-recollection and in silence—and when kissing the Sign of the Cross upon the Stole, these actions should ever be performed with the recognition, dedication

¹ *Rev.* 5:1 and *Rev.* 6:12

² Force-centers in the etheric and subtler bodies of man; see *The Chakras*, C. W. Leadbeater and *The Hidden Wisdom in the Holy Bible*, Vol. II, Geoffrey Hodson — Glossary.

and sense of grave but blessed responsibility which devolves upon one who has been called and Ordained to the Priesthood. Of course, not only the Stole, but also each vestment should ideally be assumed with a similar recognition of the meaning of the action and the significance of the garment,¹ as well as of the whole procedure of preparing oneself, whether Acolyte, Priest or Bishop for the Offices which are to be fulfilled in the Name and the Service of the Lord.

The form of the Sign of the Cross indicates its potency when ceremonially made or, if the term may be permitted, "cut in the air"; for the vertical arm symbolically represents Spirit and actually conveys the outpoured spiritual power of the First Aspect of the Blessed Trinity. Evoked from the inmost Source of the Universe and the Dweller in the Innermost of the Priest, this power is necessarily of both a pure and perfect whiteness and an irresistible potency. The horizontal arm, in its turn, refers to the Third Aspect of the Blessed Trinity and symbolizes matter, whether universal or of the bodies of him or her by whom or on whose behalf the Sign is made. This substance becomes irresistibly penetrated by the "descending" spiritual power and penetrated in every atom of its construction by the awakening and sensitizing effects.

The Sign of the Cross may indeed be regarded as one of the most powerful of all Signs and symbols which a human being can make and employ ceremonially. At Holy Communion, these effects are also produced over the Sacred Elements before and during the acts of Consecration

¹ See *The Science of the Sacraments*, C. W. Leadbeater.

as also both in the air above and within the bodies of the members of the Clergy and Congregation, particularly at the invitation to partake. The results will presumably vary according to the responsiveness of the recipients in the case of human beings, but the general effect is to increase sensitivity to outpoured spiritual powers and to Christlike and Angelic ministrations. Maximum responsiveness is thus added to the blessings which are bestowed.

In all this, instruction by a Priest to his people concerning the significance of the Sign of the Cross and of the purposes for which it is so frequently made throughout Christian Services, intelligent cooperation born of understanding may then aid in ensuring their fullest response. This is equally the case when the Sacred Sign is made over oneself and the action should therefore always be performed with fullest possible understanding and intent and never perfunctorily.

CHAPTER II

HOLY BAPTISM

Apart from its more formal and even legal functions, the ceremonial of this first Sacrament is designed to attune, and so link, the new mental, emotional and physical vehicles of the re-incarnated, spiritual Soul to the Lord Christ Himself and so be "received" by Him into the Fellowship of His Church in His capacity of Spiritual Head of the Christian Faith. In addition, the spiritual Soul itself is enabled to express its nature, convey its ideals and purposes and inspire the new personality more freely and fully than might normally be the case. These results of the Sacrament are obtained partly according to the degree in which the Priest with conscious knowledge and full intent performs the Rite, and also of course, the evolutionary stature of the recipients, the natural responsiveness of their vehicles, especially the etheric and the physical. To these considerations would naturally be added the *karma* with its modifying influences which has been brought over from former lives.

Whilst Holy Baptism may not justly be described as essential or necessary, and although no knowledge of it may be carried forward as the personality grows up, nevertheless very real help both in general and especially in times of great need is undoubtedly received. The Inner Self has, for example, been brought into a favorable relationship with its new vehicles. This applies not only to the inner counterparts of the physical bodies, but also to the whole aura, the

vibratory frequencies of which are permanently increased by the grace and blessing afforded by Our Lord Christ Himself; for each of the Signs of the Cross render the recipient increasingly responsive.

THE MINISTRY OF THE ANGELS

As in all the abundant transmissions to mankind by Our Lord of His spiritual benedictions and powers, He receives the collaboration of the appropriate Orders of Archangels and Angels. The Sacrament of Baptism is no exception to this form of ministration, the whole Service being observed and aided by an Archangel endowed with attributes of Gabriel and Angelic members of "His" Order. These latter surround Priest, the recipient and the people present at all correctly performed Baptisms. Attunement with this Order, its exalted Head and his company of Angels at each level or plane of consciousness, substance, and human vehicle, can be of inestimable value throughout the whole life of the Baptized person and especially at periods or moments of crisis and special need.

When the reincarnating Self is unusually evolved, has possibly passed through ceremonies of Baptism and Initiation in former lives, and so becomes moved to resume in the new incarnation the spiritual activities of other days, these effects of Baptism can be of very great assistance. Examples of this aid could be the possession of a natural facility in invoking and directing spiritual forces, in collaborating with the Angelic Hosts in so doing and in the case of a Priest, becoming a healer, teacher and spiritual Father to his fellow men.

CHAPTER III

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS ON THE CROWN OF THE HEAD AND THE FOREHEAD

The Sacred Chrism has itself—partly by the use of the Sign of the Cross—been subjected to processes which increase its capacity to contain and convey spiritualizing energies. It is then applied to the crown of the head by the thumb of the Priest. This digit is ordained to be so used because of its mutual resonance or vibrational harmony with the First Aspect of the Blessed Trinity and so with the power thereof resident within both the Monad and the spiritual Self of the Priest. The thumb of the right hand is, therefore, naturally the most suitable digit wherewith to perform the important ceremony of Anointing.

The actual contact of the oil with the skin of the scalp or very near to it, itself conveys spiritual power to the physical body, to which is added that which flows through the higher vehicles, the body and the thumb itself of the officiating Priest. This action should be accurately performed at the anterior fontanelle, the intersection of the two arms being there located very precisely. In consequence, the spiritualizing and sensitizing effects previously described pass into the brain with reduced resistance which the skull might offer. Anatomical accuracy focuses the power into the very center of the channels of communion in the etheric, emotional and mental bodies of the recipient. The so-called “lotus,”

“wheel” or *chakram*,¹ situated at the crown of the head is also made to spin more rapidly than would be normal, this also serving to render it more effective in its dual function of channel of communion from the Inner Self to the bodily man and from the latter to the Inner Self. The brain becomes, in consequence, highly charged with the particular energies which the Rite of Baptism has been ordained to convey with the aid of the Angelic Hosts. These effects are never lost, never erased during the lifetime, being established in the essential substances of the four vehicles.

The utterance of the Greek word “Ephpatha,” which means “Be thou opened,” both indicates the purposes for which the Ceremony is being performed and, by its sound-vibrations charged with priestly power and intent, aids in the effectiveness of the Rite of Baptism.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS ON THE FOREHEAD

As the Prayer spoken at the procedure called “The Reception” indicates, the application of the spiritualizing and sensitizing forces by means of the Chrism, the Signs of the Cross, the thumb and the assisting members of the Angelic Hosts, indicates that the functioning of the active mind in the body whilst it is awake, is to be stimulated into gradually increasing efficiency. To this end, the forces employed are directed through the channel of communion, which is open at the brow, and along its “stalk” which leads into the pituitary gland and thence more deeply towards

¹ See *The Chakras*, C. W. Leadbeater

the mid-brain and its organs which are stimulated into supernormal activity. This, of course, in the infant and very young child is largely, not entirely, but temporarily, achieved. Nevertheless, a permanent effect—potentially most beneficent—is also achieved and in degree according to the evolutionary stature of the spiritual Soul.

The successful arousing and sublimation of the fiery fire—creative energy in the spine and the consequent opening of the channels which has been achieved in former lives—whether by the long contemplation under wise direction or on passage through the Initiations of the Greater Mysteries—is always transferred in some of its effects—responsiveness to similar procedures, for example—into the personalities of every succeeding life. The privilege of receiving correctly performed Baptism, whether in childhood or as an adult, is thus always of great benefit in granting to the Inner Self readier access to the brain and in increased responsiveness within the brain-mind itself.

The Priest need not necessarily give consideration to these items of spiritual philosophy, but as already suggested, should apply the sacred Chrism and make the Sign of the Cross as accurately and with such clear intent as may be possible to him. The physical and super-physical aspects of these procedures are, however, of very great importance; for the whole of the subsequent incarnation of a baptized person can be most beneficially influenced by these Ceremonies. Hence, their original very careful preparations and their continued use throughout the ages.

CHAPTER IV

THE WHITE VESTURE

THE MINISTRY OF THE ANGELS

The Stole or the white vesture and the deliverance of a lighted candle—spiritually “charged” because handled by and near to a Priest—with their explained symbology, can also potentially be of great assistance even if the recollection of such incidents is not retained. Their effects are, however, impressed upon both the instinctual bodily consciousness, sometimes called “elemental,” and upon the matter of the etheric and superphysical vehicles. Spiritualizing impulses are thus applied to these vehicles and their innate consciousness which may greatly help the Inner Self both to control the personality and to resist tendencies and temptations to fall into error.

The brief Ceremony at which the Priest places his hand upon the head of the child and, using the given name, says “go in peace and may the Lord be with Thee,” can also be of very great importance. Simple though it appears to be it brings the Inner Self of Priest and child into intimate relationship not only with each other but with the Lord Christ in Whose Holy Name the Ceremony is being performed. A physical link is similarly made when the whole hand of the Priest is placed upon the head and so at the position of the all-important channel of communion which exists there. The action should, therefore, be performed with the fullest intent

and even, one might suggest, with a measure of priestly concern and affection. Those who are present may usefully have been guided in the importance and manner in which—as on all occasions—the consenting response “Amen” is spoken.

THE FINAL CHARGE

These concepts may also be in the mind of the Priest as he speaks the noble words of this Charge which is largely self-explanatory. Here also, however, *all* present should participate mentally as fully as possible in all that is thus so solemnly uttered on behalf of the one who has thus received the inestimable privilege of Baptism with its associated reception into the body of the Church.

THE MINISTRY OF THE ANGELS

This Commentary upon the Rite of Baptism has been chiefly concerned with ideas about the spiritual, superphysical and physical purposes and effects of the Sign of the Cross. The Invocation at The First Anointing to the Angelic Hosts has not, in consequence, received attention. My books on the subject¹ may perhaps be of interest, especially in their assurance of the reality of this ministration. Sufficient has, perhaps, now been written concerning the Sign of the Cross as both a symbol and a source of power, to offer guidance to Priests and others in its use during Baptisms and in all other Church Services.

¹ See *The Brotherhood of Angels and of Men*, Geoffrey Hodson.

CHAPTER V

CANDLESTICKS, CANDLES, THE CROZIER

If the repetition be pardoned and the author's assumption of knowledge be excused, then the correct—meaning most effective—use of these ecclesiastical symbols is based severally upon thorough understanding of their purpose, their symbolic significance, the spiritual power which they portray in physical matter and the mentally held intent whenever they are used.

The sevenfold lights—the Altar Cross in this case completing the number seven—above the Altar may perhaps remind one of the seven-stemmed, golden candlestick¹ known as the *Menorah*, which God instructed Moses to place in the Temple in the wilderness. Elsewhere,² I have suggested an interpretation of this symbol which may also apply to candlesticks above the Altar.

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

“The *Menorah* or seven-stemmed golden candlestick was said to have been constructed in accordance with divine guidance received by Moses on the Mount (Ex. 25:31,32). Its decreed position in the Hebrew Sanctuary suggests that it was not meant to serve as an illumination since only the central candle was kept burning

¹ *Menorah*, Ex. 20:31

² “The Golden Candlestick”: see the inside of the book cover in *The Hidden Wisdom in the Holy Bible*, Vol. I and II, Geoffrey Hodson.

during the day. The other six candles were lighted from it, referring perhaps to the existence of that One Light from which all other lights proceed. Since, furthermore, the Sanctuary was dark, having no windows, even seven candles could not have provided the necessary illumination. Clearly, then, the golden candlestick was intended to be both an embellishment and a profoundly philosophical symbol, representing all septenates in Nature and in man. Unlighted, it symbolizes the concealed Wisdom, and lighted, it symbolizes Wisdom revealed. The kabalistic Tree of Life, with its sevenfold Macrocosmic and microcosmic connotations and almost infinite number of correspondences, may also be presumed to be referred to by the symbol of the seven-stemmed golden candlestick."

A ceremonially used symbol may be severally regarded. It is, of course, made of a physical substance, for example metal, jewel, wood or a combination of these. If especially consecrated for some religious purpose, then it may be seen as a visible center of, and channel for, invisible forces according to the purposes for which it was constructed and perhaps consecrated. In the latter case, the symbol should ideally be regarded and treated more respectfully, if not reverently, than other objects not so constructed and used for such purposes. This view is recognized when candlesticks, for example, are respectfully handled and censed during Services and cleansed by devoted servants of the Church.

A special significance has, however, been attributed to the lights over Altars of the Liberal Catholic Church, namely to the seven principles of man and to the spiritual and other powers and

qualities of character accentuated in individuals, and known as the Seven Rays.¹ If this view be accepted, then when censuring, for example, the Priest may choose to remember the attributed relationships of each candle with both parts of the make-up of man and members of the Assembly of "just men made perfect."² The particular hierarchy of Angels and Archangels associated with these groups of Correspondences may be remembered and also those which have ceremonially been linked to each appropriate candle, the association having been affirmed by the insertion of a corresponding jewel in accordance with certain teachings of the Ancient Wisdom.³

Admittedly, the act of censuring itself demands of the Officiant considerable concentration if it is to be effectively performed and particularly from Clergy in the early period of their Priesthood. Practice by those who find themselves temperamentally so moved, may, however, render the combination of the physical act of censuring and of recollection of the intellectual and spiritual principles which each candlestick represents, increasingly practical. This combination of correct physical action and increasingly clear concept of the meaning of the act, is one part of the valuable training which all may receive if they so choose, from participation—whether active or passive—in ordered ceremonials. Eventually, the association of physical objects and actions with their spiritual meanings and purposes, becomes increasingly natural and this might be

¹ See *The Seven Human Temperaments*, Geoffrey Hodson.

² *Heb.* 12:23

³ See *The Science of the Sacraments*, C. W. Leadbeater.

regarded as a development to which the ideal Priest aspires.

Study classes and Sermons may most usefully deliver to members of the Congregation knowledge of the meanings of the candlesticks and other symbols and of the actions associated with them—censing, for example—so that they, in their turn may be well informed and remember and so develop in themselves in the highest forms the powers and qualities which symbols and Ritual procedures are designed to portray. In this, also, the ideal Priest becomes not only ceremonialist but teacher as well.

THE CROZIER

The symbol of the spiral has been used by peoples throughout the historical period, presumably to refer to the principles of cycles and ascending spirals, which are made manifest or followed in the emanation, involution and evolution of successive universes and all that they contain.¹ As in certain candlesticks and what are called “Ray Crosses,” certain chosen jewels are also inserted in the Crozier of the Bishop, these as suggested refer to powers of the Godhead, their presence in the spiritual Selves of men and qualities of human nature and are specially blessed in order that they may add to the efficacy of the Crozier as a physical focus of and channel for these spiritual powers, directed as they are by Orders of Angels and Archangels. The Crozier of the Bishop is, therefore, a Center of spiritualizing forces.

¹ See *The Hidden Wisdom in the Holy Bible*, Vol. I, Chapter on *The Prodigal Son*, Geoffrey Hodson.

Such ideas as these may, it is recognized, first be learned and held in mind as acquired knowledge. Meditation upon the inner purposes of consecrated symbols, with their associated jewels, may bring an illumination to the Priest, which convinces him of the complete realism behind ceremonies and symbols when used regularly and selflessly in the service of the Supreme Deity and the members of the human race. Those who have by meditation become thus illumined—however partially at first—may experience a form of extra sensory perception which could cause them to see consecrated objects and symbols as surrounded by, and glowing and radiating with normally invisible light, sometimes of many hues. The forces flowing through the Angels associated with each of them may also be not only mentally envisaged but intuited and even “seen” if only in moments of elation and enlightenment.

It may perhaps be usefully interpolated here that all Signs of the Cross made more particularly upon the brow of a physical body, whether of infant, child or adult, and applying oil that has been especially blessed, may facilitate the opening of such inward vision and its superphysical organ of sight. Whilst in no way encouraging the pursuit of psychic development and clairvoyant visions as necessary capacities of an ideal Priest—quite the contrary, in fact—devotees are sometimes afforded the kind of visions and realization to which the author is referring and these can assist in increasing the sense of complete realism concerning the spiritual and physical powers and purposes of ceremonials. This in its turn may add

to the effectiveness with which a ceremonialist performs his or her functions.

The illumination of the human mind with understanding and deep insight into the purposes for which the Ancient Mysteries and their subsequent and modern “valid” representatives have been established—namely, as outward and visible signs and channels of inward spiritual Grace—will naturally increase the effectiveness of an Officiating Participant in those Mysteries.

Regular daily contemplation of the divine and the purification of the bodily life, the heart and the mind, especially freeing them of either cruelty or self-desire in any form whatever, are the surest means of developing that interior, intuitive vision and implicit insight from which knowledge of underlying principles, laws and processes in nature may be gained.

With these thoughts and suggestions the author closes his presentation of a group of ideas which seem to him to be pertinent to the fulfillment of the highest ideals of the “sweet but heavy burden on the Priesthood.”